

August 2006: Conferences, Honors, Meetings and Medals

In August CDFA Director of Trade Robert Tse and I participated in the 16th annual meeting of the Tri-national Agricultural Accord in Alberta, Canada. Secretaries, commissioners, directors, ministers and senior government officials from eight Canadian provinces, 16 U.S. states and 15 Mexican states worked together to improve understanding and strengthen collaboration among the agricultural sectors of the three NAFTA countries. There are three tri-lateral working groups: Rural Development, Harmonization (of sanitary and phytosanitary measures and standards) and Trade Remedies. These topics represent the subject matters of interest to state and provincial agricultural officials of the three countries.

Breeding stock import requirements is a common issue raised by all three countries. Delegates agreed that the issue of continental trade in breeding stock requires immediate attention, with particular focus on current policies affecting tri-lateral trade. Participants recommend that all countries continue to work toward reinstating trade in *all classes* of breeding stock. California is particularly concerned with the distinction Mexico is making in allowing dairy breeding stock into that country, though banning other breeding stock imports.

I am very pleased to announce that Dr. Richard Breitmeyer, our state veterinarian, received the 2006 Agricultural Progress Award from the State Fair Agricultural Advisory Council. He received this honor in recognition of his extensive contributions over a number of years to the promotion, advancement and growth of the California State Fair agricultural programs. “Dr. B” has worked diligently with the state fair staff to ensure success of their award-winning DNA testing program established in 1994. He has made many contributions to the success of the Cal Expo Quality Assurance, Youth Livestock and Veterinary Health Inspectors programs.

Dr. Breitmeyer has worked at CDFA for more than 20 years as a tireless innovator, protector and promoter of agriculture. He is considered a world authority on animal diseases and California is fortunate to have a veterinarian of his experience and expertise addressing important health issues that affect our food safety and state animal-disease quarantines.

This state’s high quality dairy products continue to garner international recognition as the “best of the best.” In June, California cheese makers won 13 medals in this year’s judging at London’s prestigious [2006 World Cheese Awards](#): three gold medals, three silver medals and seven bronze medals. Seven California cow’s milk cheese producers won medals. Over the past three years, California cheese producers have won a total of 24 awards in this highly competitive judging.



CDFA was well represented at the [International Conference on the Future of Agriculture](#) which was held in Sacramento this month. Steve Shaffer, director of our Office of Agriculture and Environmental Stewardship (AES), served on the conference organizing committee. Undersecretary A. J. Yates gave the keynote address the second day of the conference. CDFA staff identified current and future opportunities to integrate sound science, technological innovation and demonstration projects to help direct environmental policy efforts toward increased environmental performance and sustainability on farms.

AES, the Integrated Pest Control Branch and the Fertilizer Research and Education Program jointly prepared and staffed an information booth at the conference. They highlighted CDFA programs that enhance environmental stewardship. Steve spoke about integrated approaches to the important environmental issues facing agriculture and also moderated a session on animal production policy. Ken Trott, staff environmental scientist, discussed stewardship opportunities in the next farm bill. And Matt Summers, air resources engineer, presented results of poultry house air quality emissions studies.

In the upcoming weeks I'll be attending town hall meetings on agricultural disaster recovery at the commissioner's offices in Tulare County (9/6, 6-8 PM) and Stanislaus County (9/14, 9-11 AM).

As always, thank you for your support. Feel free to contact my office with any questions or concerns.



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Steve Shaffer, CDFA Director of the Office of Agriculture and Environmental Stewardship, speaks with attendees at the recent **International Conference on The Future of Agriculture**, held in Sacramento. Photo: N. Krout / CDFA



Asparagus and Almonds, Fresno County Photo: E. Williams / CDFA